RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL
“Inaugural Flights”

All Just Happened To Occur In The Month of July

In its electronic form, this document contains underlined, hypertext links to additional material, including alternative source data and archived video/audio clips.
[To open these links in a separate browser tab and thus not lose your place in this e-document, press control+click (Windows) or command+click (Apple Mac) on the underlined word or image]

Version 1.0 dated 20 June 2023 IBM Steward

Introduction

Whether it be significant dates in the RAF College calendar or those in the RAF timeline, the month of July appears to have been a quiet month throughout the RAF's distinguished history.

Every February, for example, Cranwellians can celebrate the RAF College's Founders' Day; every April, the Falklands conflict; every May, VE Day, Whittle's first jet flight and the Dambusters raid; every June, Dunkirk and D-Day ops; every September, Battle of Britain Day; every November, Remembrance Day. But July, in historical terms, appears to have been a comparatively quiet month.

However, the British weather may have come to our aid here, as there have been a number of aviation milestones during our unpredictable summers. This album catalogues a number of "July" milestones in the RAF's history, many of which would indirectly have a bearing on RAF College history and the careers of College alumni.

We add it for your enjoyment to the other albums that form the Cranwellian Historical Society's July *Feature of the Month*. Look out for the underlined embedded links to amplifying data and videos. *[To open these links in a separate browser tab and thus not lose your place in this e-document, press control+click (Windows) or command+click (Apple Mac) on the underlined word or image]*

1st Airship Trans-Atlantic Flights - July 1919

Extracts courtesy of the Airship Heritage Trust https://www.airshipsonline.com/airships/r34/index.html

Herbert Scott

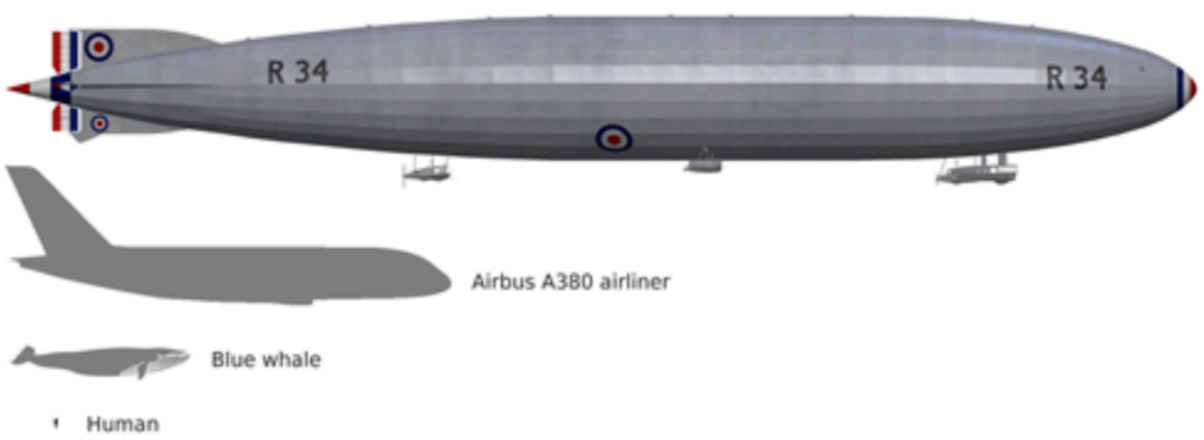
Scott in 1919

Born	25 May 1888 Lewisham, London
Died	5 October 1930 (aged 42) Beauvais, France
Cause of death	crash of R101
Resting place	St Mary's church, Cardington, United Kingdom
Nationality	English
Other names	"Lucky, "Lucky Breeze", "Daredevil Lucky"
Known for	First transatlantic airship flight; first east-west transatlantic flight; development of high mooring mast
Spouse	Jessie Campbell
Awards	AFC, CBE
	Aviation career
Full name	George Herbert Scott
Air force	RNAS, RAF
Battles	First World War

To the members of her crew, His Majesty's Airship R34 was known as 'Tiny' - inevitably. The ship was enormous: as big as a contemporary 'Dreadnought' battleship. Her overall length from bow to stern was 643 feet, twice as long as a football field; her maximum diameter was 79 feet and her overall height just short of 92 feet. Her cost was around £350,000 and her total gas capacity was 1,950,000 cubic ft, giving a gross lift of about 59 tons and a disposable lift, when the weight of the structure and permanent fittings was discounted, of 26 tons.

On 1st July 1919, the ship was gassed to its limit and loaded to its full capacity, and by the end of the evening the ship was ready to go. The ship's official departure time was set at 2.00am (GMT) on 2nd July in order to obtain the maximum lift from her gasbags. She was eased out of her shed slowly by 700 members of the handling party. The weather forecast was favourable and Sqn Ldr GH Scott RAF, formerly of the RNAS, decided not to wait any longer, and at 1.42 am (GMT) the signal to release was given and the R34 lifted slowly in to the misty night sky. Her five engines were signalled to commence and the propellers roared into life. The ship was on the way to America, but was so loaded for the journey, that even with the forward momentum of the engines, she very slowly gained height. The R34 travelled along the Firth of Forth, then at a height of 1,300ft she cleared Rosyth, Glasgow, and down the Clyde by daybreak. After 108 hours 12 minutes flying time, the R34 landed at 9.54am on 6 July in Mineola, New York. This became the world endurance record, breaking that set previously by the British NS 11. There were 140 gallons of fuel left on board, which was sufficient only for another 2 hours flying at reduced power.

As with the flight to America, the R34 would be gassed to capacity again for her return, and await the coolest part of the day to depart, and so the ship was finally launched at 6 minutes to midnight on Wednesday July 10th, landing quietly at Pulham Air Station three days later at 6.57 GMT.



Size comparison of the R 34

Long Range Non-Stop Flight - 7/8 July 1938

Extracts courtesy of HISTORYNET https://www.historynet.com/flight-of-the-wellesleys/

On July 7-8, 1938, a proving flight by four RAF Long Range Development Unit (LRDU) Wellesleys from RAF Cranwell to Ismailia and Shaibah, Iraq, covered 4,300 miles in 32 hours, at an average ground speed of 135 mph. They returned to Upper Heyford a week later. Although that flight went well, it was not until October 24 that four Wellesleys arrived at Ismailia to prepare for the actual record attempt.

Each LRDU aircraft was crewed by a first pilot, a second pilot/navigator and a third pilot/wireless operator. Every man would take a turn at the controls. In the long, tubular fuselage, the changeover required gymnastic ability, as Flight Lt. Brian Burnett described:

"The fuselage was pretty narrow and congested, with the navigator and wireless operator positioned in line behind the pilot, so that to change pilots, the first pilot had to have his seat let down from behind and climb out backwards while the second pilot squeezed by to grab the flying controls and climb in for the seat to be pushed up behind him. If the automatic pilot was working this was not too bad, but it wasn't always! And one had to move fairly smartly."

LRDU crews gather for a group portrait in front of one of the well-traveled Wellesleys. (RAF Museum, Hendon)

The pilot/wireless operator in the rear must have needed even greater dexterity when his turn came to fly the plane.

Ultimately, it was decided that only three of the four aircraft would make the attempt:

- L2638 (LR1), with Sqn Ldr Richard Kellett, the flight commander, as first pilot, Flt Lt Nick Gething as second pilot/navigator and Plt Off Maurice Gaine as pilot/wireless operator;

- L2639 (LR2), with Flt Lt Rupert Hogan, Fg Off George Musson and Flt Sgt TD Dixon;

- and L2680 (LR3), with Flt Lt Andrew Combe, Flt Lt Burnett and Sgt Hector Gray.

All had been chosen based on their fitness and stamina.

First Gloster Meteor Op - 21 July 1944

No. 616 (South Yorkshire) Squadron RAuxAF

Squadron badge

Active	1 November 1938 – 29 August 1945 10 May 1946 – 10 March 1957 1 April 2019 -
Country	United Kingdom
Branch	Royal Air Force
Type	Reserve Sqn
Role	ISTAR
Part of	Royal Auxiliary Air Force
Garrison/HQ	RAF Waddington
Nickname(s)	South Yorkshire
Motto(s)	Latin: *Nulla Rosa Sine Spina* (Translation: "No rose without a thorn") [1][2]
post 1951 aircraft insignia	

Commanders

Honorary Air Commodore	The Duke of Portland[3]
Notable commanders	Colin Falkland Gray, Percy "Laddy" Lucas

Insignia

Squadron Badge heraldry	A white Yorkshire rose, superimposed on an arrow[2] The badge commemorates the squadron's association with Yorkshire as the South Yorkshire Auxiliary Squadron[1]
Squadron Codes	**QJ** (Apr 1939 – Jul 1941)[4] **YQ** (Jul 1941 – Aug 1945, 1949 – Apr 1951)[5] **RAW** (Jul 1946 – 1949)[6]

On 12 July 1944, 616 Sqn became the first RAF squadron to receive jet aircraft in the form of Gloster Meteor Mk. I fighters, testing them at RAF Culmhead.

The first Meteor operational sortie was on 27 July from RAF Manston when it intercepted V-1 flying bombs launched against southern England.

<u>The first victories came on 4 August when one V1 was tipped over after a pilot's cannon jammed and another was shot down.</u>

RAF Culmhead

Churchstanton, Somerset in England

The old control tower taken in 2006

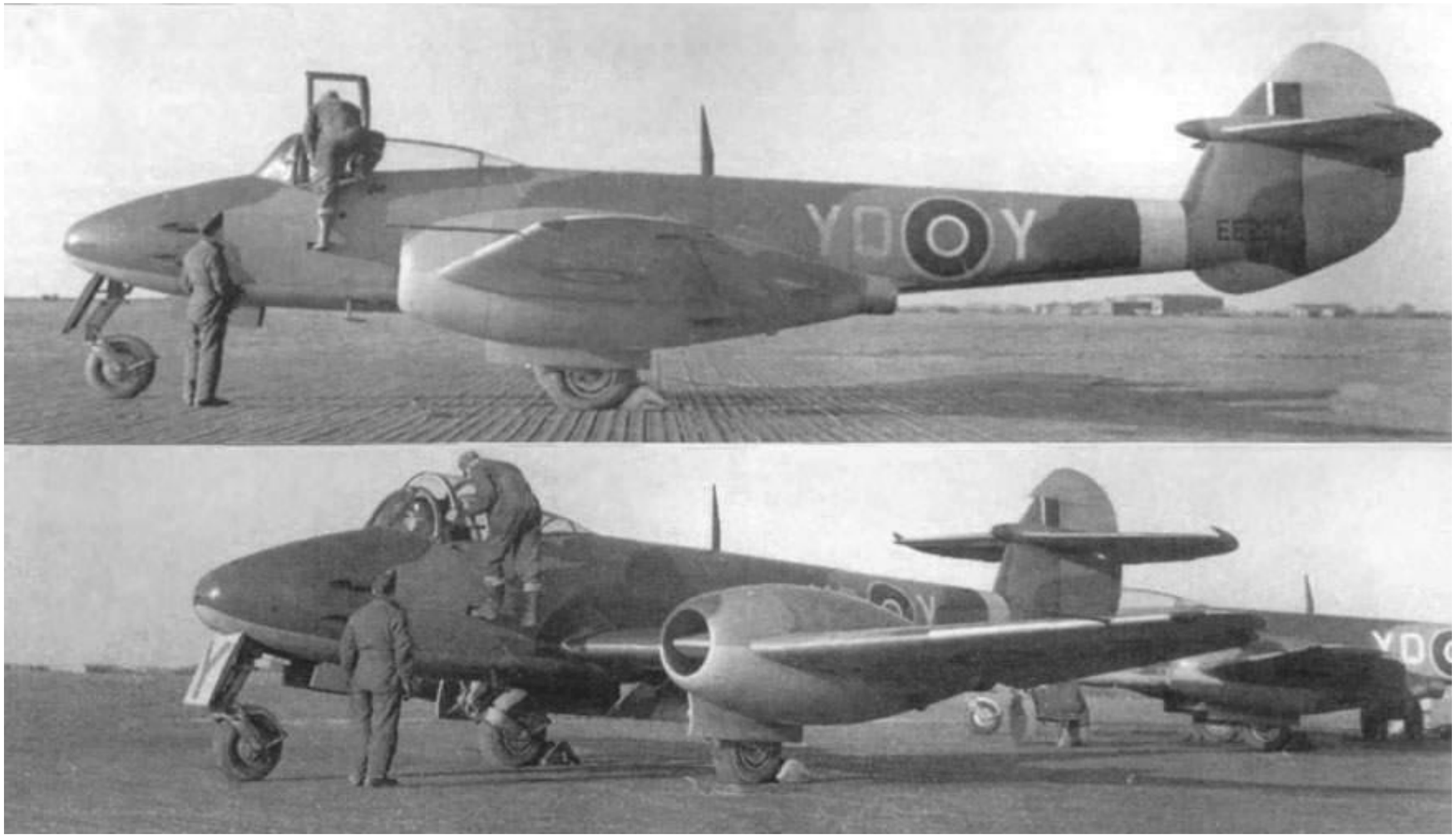
Shown within Somerset

RAF Manston

Manston, Kent in England

Arise to Protect

Location in Kent



Formation of RAF High Speed Flight - 12 July 1946

Extracts courtesy of Tangier Museum https://www.tangmere-museum.org.uk/museum-aircraft/gloster-meteor-f4

Edward "Teddy" Mortlock Donaldson

Edward Mortlock Donaldson

Nickname(s)	Teddy
Born	12 February 1912 Negeri Sembilan, British Malaya
Died	2 June 1992 (aged 80) Royal Naval Hospital Haslar, Hampshire
Buried	St Andrew's Church, Tangmere, West Sussex
Allegiance	United Kingdom
Service/ branch	Royal Air Force
Years of service	1931–1961
Rank	Air Commodore
Commands held	RAF Flying College (1958–61) RAF Wunstorf (1951–53) RAF Fassberg (1951) High Speed Flight (1946–47) RAF Milfield (1944–46) RAF Colerne (1944) No. 151 Squadron (1938–40)
Battles/wars	Second World War • Battle of Dunkirk • Battle of Britain
Awards	Companion of the Order of the Bath Commander of the Order of the British Empire Distinguished Service Order Air Force Cross* Mentioned in Despatches Officer of the Legion of Merit (United States)
Other work	Air Correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph*

During the Second World War, most of the pre-war airspeed records had been broken. The RAF decided to recapture the flight airspeed record with its new generation of jet aircraft, and set up a new High Speed Flight squadron. Group Captain Teddy Donaldson was selected to command the Air Speed Flight, established at the start of 1946. The flight included some notable pilots, such as Wg Cdr Roland Beamont DSO, Squadron Leader W.A. Waterton AFC and Flt Lt Neville Duke DSO, DFC.

On 7 September 1946, he established a new official world record of 615.78 mph (991.00 km/h; 535.10 kn) in a Gloster Meteor F.4 EE549 over Littlehampton, although some unofficial Me 262 and Me 163 flights in the Second World War achieved higher speeds. As a result, he was awarded a Bar to his Air Force Cross.

On returning from the Paris Air Show in January 1947, the same aircraft set a new record time of 20 min 11 sec between Paris (Le Bourget) and London (Croydon). She later saw service with the Fighter Command units before being retired to instructional airframe duties at Cranwell in June 1952. EE549 went into store in June 1958 before finally going on display at the RAF Museum in 1972. She is currently on loan to Tangier Museum from the RAF Museum.

Littlehampton Harbour

Location within West Sussex

First Jet Flying Boat Flight - 16 July 1947

SR.A/1

TG263 on the water

Role	Flying boat fighter
Manufacturer	Saunders-Roe
First flight	16 July 1947
Retired	1951
Status	Experimental
Primary user	Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment
Number built	3

The **Saunders-Roe SR.A/1** was a prototype flying boat fighter aircraft designed and built by British seaplane manufacturer Saunders-Roe. It was the first jet-propelled water-based aircraft in the world.

The concept behind the SR.A/1 originated during the Second World War as a reaction to Japan's successful use of military floatplanes and the emergence of the turbojet engine. Saunders-Roe presented an initial proposal of their jet-powered seaplane concept, then designated **SR.44**, to the Air Ministry during mid-1943. In April 1944, the Ministry issued Specification E.6/44 for the type and supported its development with a contract for three prototypes. Development was protracted by Saunders-Roe's work on other projects, the war having ended prior to any of the prototypes being completed.

On 16 July 1947, the first prototype, piloted by Geoffrey Tyson, made its maiden flight. The SR.A/1 was evaluated by the RAF, who concluded that the design was incapable of matching up to the performance of land-based designs. Despite interest from foreign governments, including the United States, no orders for the SR.A/1 materialised. As such, it never entered volume production or saw service with any operators. While interest in the SR.A/1 programme was briefly revived following the start of the Korean War, the aircraft was considered to be obsolete by that point and was again rejected.

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 1
- **Length:** 50 ft 0 in (15.24 m)
- **Wingspan:** 46 ft 0 in (14.02 m)
- **Height:** 16 ft 9 in (5.11 m)
- **Wing area:** 415 sq ft (38.6 m^2)
- **Empty weight:** 11,262 lb (5,108 kg)
- **Gross weight:** 16,000 lb (7,257 kg)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 19,033 lb (8,633 kg) max. overload weight with slipper tanks[23]
- **Fuel capacity:** 424 imp gal (509 US gal; 1,930 L) internal fuel,[24] provision for two 149 imp gal (179 US gal; 680 L) slipper tanks[23]
- **Powerplant:** 2 × Metropolitan-Vickers Beryl MVB.2 turbojets, 3,850 lbf (17.1 kN) thrust each

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 512 mph (824 km/h, 445 kn)
- **Endurance:** 1 hr 48 min
- **Service ceiling:** 48,000 ft (15,000 m)

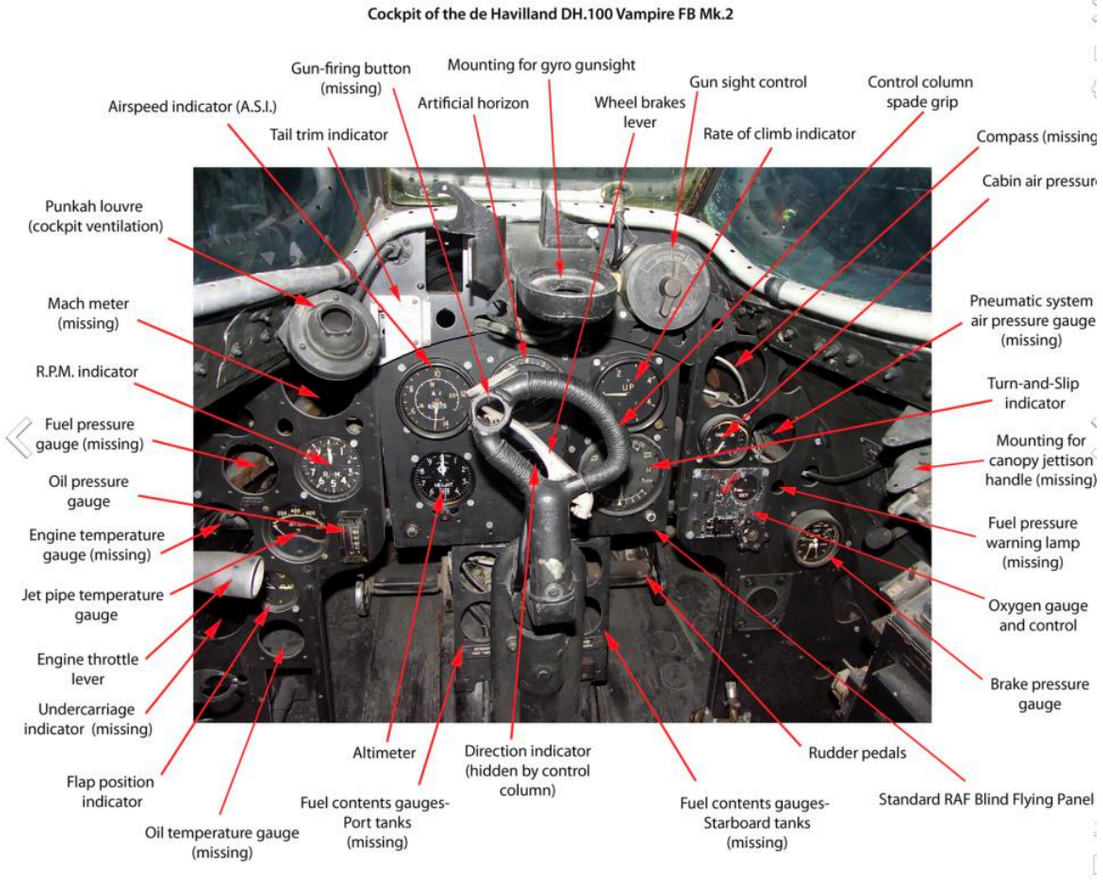
Armament

- **Guns:** 4x 20 mm Hispano Mk 5
- **Rockets:** 8× rockets[23]
- **Bombs:** 2x 1000 lb (455 kg) bombs

First Transatlantic Jet Crossing - 12/14 July 1948

On 14 July 1948, six Vampire F.3s of No. 54 Squadron RAF became the first jet aircraft to fly across the Atlantic Ocean when they arrived in Goose Bay, Labrador. They went via Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, Keflavík in Iceland and Bluie West 1, Greenland. From Goose Bay airfield they went on to Montreal (c. 3,000 mi/4,830 km) to start the RAF's annual goodwill tour of Canada and the US, where they gave formation aerobatic displays.

At the same time, USAF Colonel David C. Schilling led a group of F-80 Shooting Stars flying to Fürstenfeldbruck Air Base in Germany to relieve a unit based there. There were conflicting reports later regarding competition between the RAF and USAF to be the first to fly the Atlantic. One report said the USAF squadron delayed completion of its movement to allow the Vampires to be "the first jets across the Atlantic". Another said that the Vampire pilots celebrated "winning the race against the rival F-80s."



Cockpit layout of the Vampire FB Mk2

JETS AT LABRADOR FOR SEA CROSSING

14 U.S. Planes Prepare to Meet British in the First Such Flight Over Atlantic

By JOHN STUART

Twenty jet planes, probably the world's ablest fighters, fourteen of them United States Shooting Stars and six of them British Vampires, were poised this morning to meet in Greenland today in the first crossing of the Atlantic by such aircraft.

Fourteen Lockheed F-80's reached Goose Bay, Labrador, at 7:18 P. M., Eastern Daylight Time, two hours and four minutes after the take-off from Dow Air Base at Bangor, Me., according to a teletype radio received at the latter base. Two of the sixteen planes of a squadron of the Fifty-sixth Fighter Group, which had taken off for Bangor

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10-Year Wate Is Part of Lar to Mayor

By ROBERT

A master pla tation of the cit made public ye O'Dwyer. It inc tion in the next new piers or and sheds for tensive modern owned piers.

The plan, p partment of N and submitted Joseph Minett ten-year progr of $58,268,000 would pay $ mate was mad of the long-r

The New York Times

DOUGLAS REFU

teady for Flight

planes, of the fight- under command of Lieut. Col. David A. Schilling, and its train were ready for the hop to Greenland today, it was stated last night at Dow Air Base. Their take-off depended only on favorable weather reports from Narsarssuak, Greenland, where they were to land.

The British Vampires, storm-bound at Stornoway in the Hebrides for two weeks, reached Keflavik, Iceland, according to The Associated Press. They were accompanied by two York four-en-

First Vickers Viscount Flight - 20 July 1948

Extracts courtesy of Flight Magazine http://www.vickersviscount.net/FlightMagazineReports/1948-07-22.aspx

The Viscount prototype, showing the slim nacelles for the Rolls-Royce Dart turboprops

Joseph "Mutt" Summers	
Nickname(s)	Mutt
Born	10 March 1904 Kingston Upon Hull, England
Died	16 March 1954 (aged 50)
Buried	Weybridge, England
Allegiance	United Kingdom
Service/branch	Royal Air Force
Years of service	1924–1929
Rank	Captain
Unit	No. 29 Fighter Squadron
Awards	CBE

A remark by Captain J. Summers, Vickers' chief test pilot, that the new Viscount transport, powered by four Rolls-Royce Dart turboprop units, is "the smoothest and best" machine he has ever flown, can well be believed. He commented in this vein after landing from the initial flight of the Viscount prototype on July 16th, having been airborne for some 20 minutes.

Features of the Viscount - the world's first airliner to be driven by turboprops - were discussed in Flight of November 20th, 1947, and the latest technical data, relative to both the Dart and Naiad-powered versions, appear on this page. Planned from the outset as a successor to the Viking, the Viscount can be arranged as a 32 - or 36 - seater. In the former case the cabin is divided into two saloons, the forward seating 12, and the aft seating 20, passengers. Between the saloons is the pantry. A large door is provided at each end of the cabin, and adjacent to each door is a cloakroom for clothing and hand baggage. There are two toilet compartments, one at each end of the cabin. Provision is made for a crew of four, including a steward, and for full radio and navigational aids.

With the exception of the extreme tail and nose-wheel housing the entire fuselage is pressurized to a differential of 6½ lb/sq in. This pressure maintains ground level conditions up to a height of 15,000 ft.

It will be seen in the accompanying photograph that the cabin has large elliptical windows, the Vickers technical staff having found that an elliptical hole requires the smallest weight replacement to make an effective seal for a pressurized fuselage. A single reinforced member around each window has proved adequate. Another unusual feature, considering the civil nature of the aircraft, is the form of the pilot's cockpit enclosure, resulting in an unusually wide field of view, despite pressurizing.

In the Viscount Great Britain possesses a medium airliner of exceptional promise. Due to the adoption of the Ambassador by BEA, however, no decision has yet been made concerning production.

The Viscount is one of a number of new civil aircraft scheduled to appear at Farnborough during September.

First D H Comet 1 Flight - 27 July 1949

Extracts courtesy of RAF Museum https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/archive-exhibitions/comet-the-worlds-first-jet-airliner/

Between 1930 and 1950 military aircraft design advanced from propeller driven biplanes to jet powered monoplanes. Civil aviation remained dominated by large propeller driven aircraft until 1949 when de Havilland introduced the world to the age of the jet airliner. Sir Geoffrey de Havilland conceived the idea of the DH106 'Comet' in 1943 and design work began in September 1946. The prototype first flew on 27 July 1949.

In order to carry the maximum amount of passengers and freight, the weight of the aircraft and fuel had to be kept to a minimum. The construction techniques were a mixture of old and new: rivets were used but also glued together using a technique known as Redux bonding. This technique had been pioneered by de Havilland in the Hornet and Dove aircraft, to reduce the weight of the structure whilst keeping the strength.

After only eighteen months of service, two aircraft disappeared within three months of each other. The Secretary of State for Civil Aviation ordered a full investigation into the causes of the disappearances. This was carried out by the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough and a court of enquiry was established. One part of the investigation examined cabin pressurisation. This used water to produce cabin loading and hydraulic rams to generate wing loading. BOAC Comet, Yoke Uncle, was placed inside a water tank with the wings protruding through seals in the walls of the tank. The loads which were applied simulated a three hour flight in ten minutes. The skin of Yoke Uncle had undergone 3057 flight cycles (1221 actual and 1836 simulated) before a fatigue crack produced a failure. This occurred at a rivet hole near the forward port escape hatch. About 70% of one crashed aircraft was recovered and this confirmed that fatigue crack growth in the pressure cabin was the cause.

The last Comet I to be built, frame no 6022, was a Comet 1A ordered by Air France on 21st November 1951 along with 6020 and 6021. This aircraft was initially registered as the French civil airliner F-BGNZ. Her first flight was made at Hatfield on 16 March 1953. F-BGNZ was delivered to Air France and operated on the Paris-Rome-Beirut service from August 1953.

First Prototype Hawker Hunter Flight - 20 July 1951

Extracts courtesy of redbubble.com

First Hawker Hunter Flight | Roger Hymans (Clip)

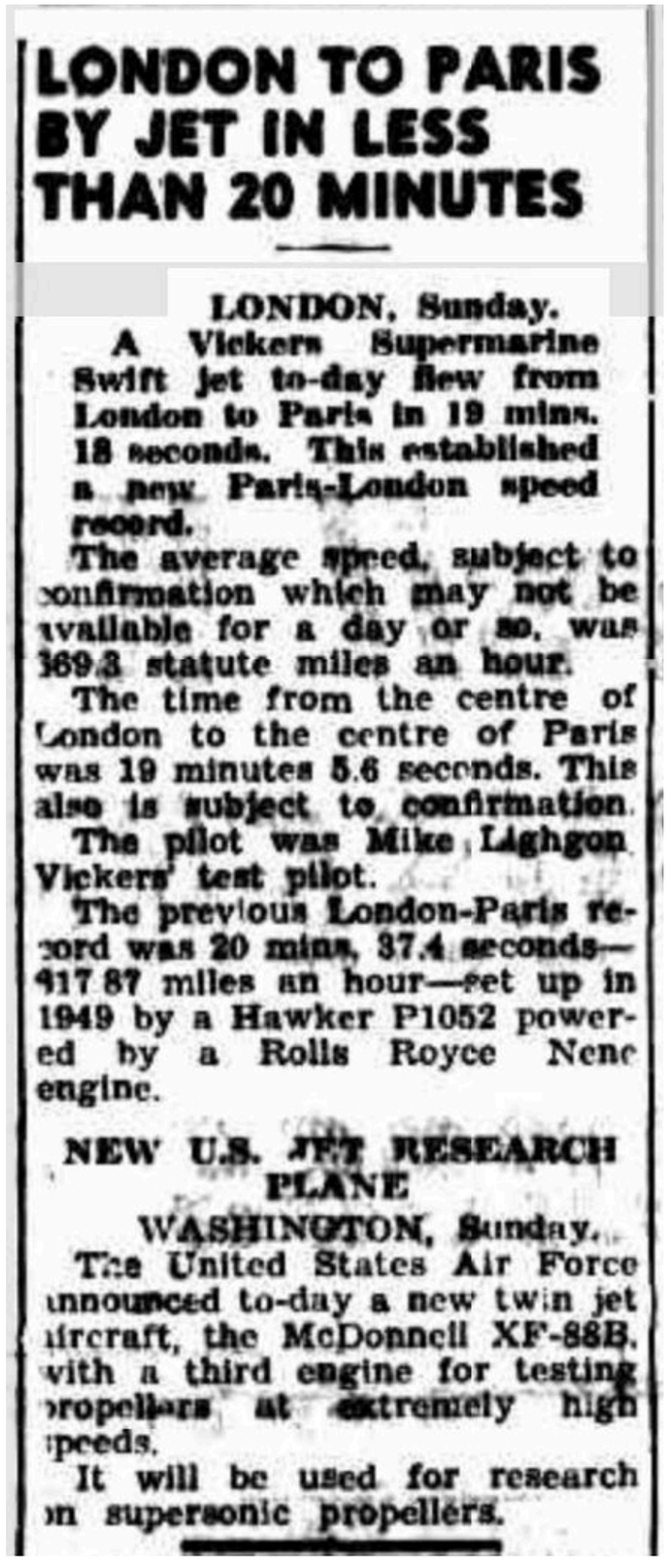
The **Hawker Hunter** was a transonic British jet-powered fighter aircraft that was developed by Hawker Aircraft for the RAF during the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was designed to take advantage of the newly developed Rolls-Royce Avon turbojet engine and the swept wing, and was the first jet-powered aircraft produced by Hawker to be procured by the RAF. On 7 September 1953, the modified first prototype broke the world air speed record for aircraft, achieving a speed of 727.63 mph (1,171.01 km/h; 632.29 kn).

Role	Fighter Fighter-bomber/Ground attack Reconnaissance aircraft
National origin	United Kingdom
Manufacturer	Hawker Siddeley
First flight	20 July 1951
Introduction	1954
Status	In service with the Air Force of Zimbabwe (2022) Active as a warbird and contractor aggressor aircraft
Primary users	Royal Air Force Indian Air Force Swedish Air Force Swiss Air Force
Number built	1,972

London to Paris Record Flight - 5 July 1953

Extracts courtesy of Trove https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2885709

LONDON TO PARIS
BY JURY IN LESS
THAN 20 MINUTES
LONDON, Sunday.
A Vickers Supermarine Swift jet to-day flew from - London to Paris in 19 mins. 18 seconds. This established a pen', Paris-London speed record., The average speed, Subject to confirmation which may not be available for a day or so, was 369 3 statute miles an hour The time from the centre of London to the centre of Paris was 19 minutes 5 6 seconds This also is subject to, confirmation The pilot was Mike a Lighgon Vickers' test pilot The previous London-Paris record was 20 mins, 37 4-5 seconds 617 87 miles an hour set up in 1948 by a Hawker 1952 powered by a Rolls Royce Nene engine



LONDON TO PARIS BY JET IN LESS THAN 20 MINUTES

LONDON, Sunday.

A Vickers Supermarine Swift jet to-day flew from London to Paris in 19 mins. 18 seconds. This established a new Paris-London speed record.

The average speed, subject to confirmation which may not be available for a day or so, was 369.3 statute miles an hour.

The time from the centre of London to the centre of Paris was 19 minutes 5.6 seconds. This also is subject to confirmation.

The pilot was Mike Lighgon Vickers' test pilot.

The previous London-Paris record was 20 mins, 37.4 seconds—617.87 miles an hour—set up in 1949 by a Hawker P1052 powered by a Rolls Royce Nene engine.

NEW U.S. JET RESEARCH PLANE

WASHINGTON, Sunday.

The United States Air Force announced to-day a new twin jet aircraft, the McDonnell XF-88B, with a third engine for testing propellers at extremely high speeds.

It will be used for research on supersonic propellers.

The **Supermarine Swift** was a British single-seat jet fighter aircraft that was operated by the RAF. It was developed and manufactured by Supermarine during the 1940s and 1950s. The Swift featured many of the new jet age innovations, such as a swept wing. On 26 September 1953, a Swift F.4 piloted by Lt Cdr Mike Lithgow RN broke the world absolute speed record, reaching a speed of 737.7 mph (1,187 km/h).

First Victor Prototype Crashes - 14 July 1954

Extracts courtesy of Aviation Safety Network https://aviation-safety.net/wikibase/20420

Date: 14-JUL-1954
Time: 13:10 LT

Type: Handley Page Victor B.1
Owner/operator: Handley Page Aircraft
Registration: WB771
MSN: HP.80/01
Fatalities: Fatalities: 4 / Occupants: 4
Other fatalities: 0
Aircraft damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)
Location: Cranfield, Bedfordshire - United Kingdom
Phase: Approach
Nature: Test
Departure airport: Boscombe Down, Wiltshire (EGDM)
Destination airport:
Confidence Rating: Information is only available from news, social media or unofficial sources
Narrative:

Handley Page HP.80 Victor prototype WB771: first flown 24/12/52 at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. Written off (destroyed) 14/7/54 when crashed at Cranfield, Bedfordshire, killing all four on board.

Position error calibration flight involving level runs at 100 ft over Cranfield airfield at increasing speeds. After numerous runs over the airfield, induced tail flutter caused cracking of the bolt holes in the fin. These allowed the three bolts securing the tailplane to loosen and shear in quick succession, the complete tailplane and elevators broke away from the aircraft. The remainder of the aircraft dived into the ground at full power, striking exactly at the intersection of the two Cranfield runways.

Crew:
Test Pilot:Squadron Leader Ronald Ecclestone DFC AFC RAF killed.
Flight Test Observer: Mr Ian K. Bennett killed.
Flight Test Observer: Mr B. Heithersay killed.
Flight Test Observer: Mr A.B. Cook killed.

Ronald 'Taffy' Ecclestone was a graduate of the Empire Test Pilots' School No 8 Course in 1949 and had recently joined Handley Page. He accepted the task to fly the Victor WB771 on this sortie so that the senior test pilot (Squadron Leader Hedley George Hazelden DFC & Bar) could carry out a rescheduled demonstration of another aircraft to a foreign sales delegation. Ecclestone had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross following a tour with 218 Squadron. Ian Bennett had been one of the two man crew (the other was Squadron Leader Hazelden) who made the first flight in a Victor on 24 December 1952.

Stress concentrations around the holes were reduced by adding a fourth bolt. The potential for flutter due to shortcomings in the design of the fin/tailplane joint was also reduced by shortening the fin. Additionally, the prototypes were tail heavy due to the lack of equipment in the nose; this was remedied by adding large ballast weights to the prototypes. Production Victors had a lengthened nose to move the crew escape door further from the engine intakes as the original position was considered too dangerous as an emergency exit in flight. The lengthened nose also improved the center of gravity range.

HP.80 Victor

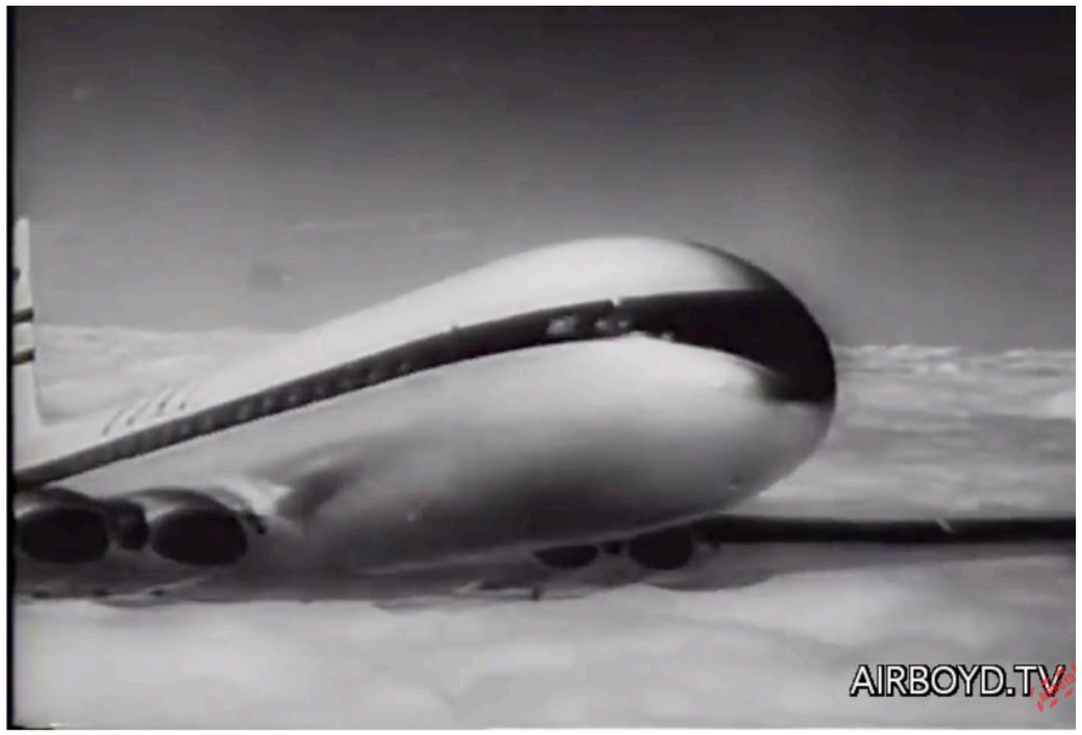
Handley Page HP-80 Victor K2 after landing, with drag parachute deployed

Role	Strategic bomber or aerial refueling tanker aircraft
National origin	United Kingdom
Manufacturer	Handley Page Limited
First flight	24 December 1952
Introduction	April 1958
Retired	15 October 1993
Status	Retired
Primary user	Royal Air Force
Produced	1952–1963
Number built	86

First D H Comet 3 Flight - 19 July 1954

Extracts courtesy of BAe Systems https://www.baesystems.com/en-uk/heritage/de-havilland-comet-3---4

De Havilland DH106 Comet 3 G-ANLO BOAC Air-Air



de Havilland Comet 3 Introduced (1955) G-ANLO

The De Havilland Aircraft Company DH106 Comet 3 (G-ANLO) flew for the first time on 19th July 1954, and was in reality an extensively developed aircraft, derived from the earlier DH106 Comet 1 and 2. Fuselage length was increased by 15' 5" to provide accommodation for up to 58 passengers (although this was further increased with the introduction of the DH 106 Comet 4) plus the addition of wing pinion fuel tanks which were introduced to provide extended range capability.

Many regard the DH106 Comet 3 as the most attractive in appearance of all the DH106 Comets, although trials indicated that it lacked the range required for North Atlantic operations. Further modifications were introduced to generate the DH106 Comet 4, the main production variant utilised by BOAC. The DH106 Comet 4 had the required performance for non-stop services from London to New York, this service being inaugurated on 4th October 1958.

The final version the DH106 Comet 4C combined the fuselage of the DH106 Comet 4B, with the wings of the DH106 Comet 4, to produce a long fuselage variant with pinion tanks. The DH106 Comet 4C was notably successful in the export market with sales to Misrair, Mexicana, Aerolineas Argentinas, Sudan Airways, Kuwait Airways and Middle East Airlines.

First RAF Phantom FGR2s Ordered - 20 July 1968

Extracts courtesy of RAF Museum https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/collections/mcdonnell-douglas-phantom-fgr2/

Serial No:	XV424	**Museum:**	London
Period:	Post-WWII	**Location:**	Hangars 3 and 4
Reference:	1994/1348/A	**On Display:**	Yes

The Phantom formed a major part of the RAF's combat aircraft strength for over twenty years and provided the Service with one of the world's most capable strike fighters.

Two versions of the Rolls Royce Spey-powered Phantom entered service with the RAF. The FG1 (the version also used by the Royal Navy) in the interceptor role and the FGR2 in the ground attack and tactical reconnaissance role in Germany. From 1977, all the RAF Phantoms were used exclusively as interceptor fighters over United Kingdom air-space.

Great Britain bought fifty two Phantom FG1s and 118 Phantom FGR2s. With the deployment of Phantoms to the South Atlantic in 1982, an additional order for 15 Phantoms was placed. These were second hand United States Navy F-4Js fitted with General Electric F-79 engines. After an extensive refurbishment and the fitting of some British equipment, they were designated F-4J(UK).

The collapse of the threat from the Eastern Europe led to an accelerated run down of the Phantom fleet and the last unit disbanded at the end of September 1992.

First RAF VTOL Sqn Formed - July 1969

Under the command of Squadron Leader Bryan Baker, the squadron became the world's first operator of a V/STOL aircraft with the arrival of the Hawker Siddeley Harrier in 1969, declared operational the following year. A detachment from 1 (F) Sqn was deployed aboard the Carrier Battle Group (TG 317.8) of the Falklands Task Force during the Falklands War, operating from HMS *Hermes* and flying ground attack missions against Argentine forces. It replaced its first generation Harriers with Harrier IIs from 23 November 1988, being declared fully operational on the Harrier GR.5 on 2 November 1989. The sqn was the subject of an episode of the BBC documentary series *Defence of the Realm* before and during its participation in the Bosnian War as part of NATO's *Operation Deny Flight*. During the Kosovo war the Squadron flew sorties as part of NATO's Operation Allied Force

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1 (F) Sqn left the "home of the Harrier" at RAF Wittering for RAF Cottesmore on 28 July 2000. Cottesmore became home to all operational RAF Harrier squadrons – 20 (Reserve) Sqn, later renumbered as 4 (R) Sqn, the Harrier Operational Conversion Unit remained at Wittering. The squadrons both flew missions during the Iraq War and were awarded the "Iraq 2003" battle honour.

The squadron was awarded a battle honour in March 2020, recognising its role in the War in Afghanistan.

One outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review by the coalition government in 2010 was the decision to take the RAF's Harriers out of service almost immediately. All Harrier units, including 1 (F) Sqn, ceased Harrier flying on 15 December 2010, with 1 (F) Sqn formally disbanding on 28 January 2011.